

Struggle

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Summary: Hiccup, a young hero, left for a great city in the south to become a great magician. But when he meets Jack during his exams and has a strange encounter, he is placed in the heart of an unforeseen war and unprecedented scale. Fortune does not favor the weak so will Hiccup and Jack have the strength to save those around them or let alone the strength to survive? (Hijack Magic AU)

Struggle

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His mouth was dry and his throat was scratchy but he might as well get used to it now before he could start traveling. For today would be the first day of his trek to Central South.

It was a big occasion, one worth mentioning in a more grandiose fashion but also one worth being cautious of. Hiccup spent his entire life preparing for this moment. Days of smuggling books into the shepherd's fields, weeks of practicing under the light of a candle, months of staring at a piece of iron in the workshop to bend and warp at his command.

But it was all worth it in the end.

If he went to the city and did well on his exam then he could be placed into the hierarchy. He could get a placement in some fledgling hamlet, work for a grand official, or even be given his own room at an academy and research to his heart's content! He wasn't concerned with honor or glory, a strange thing for such a young person like himself, but honor wasn't his greatest concern. It was hard to be concerned with honor at all when he helped his village end the war against the dragons, not through violence but through empathy.

He pushed the covers off his bed and scratched his back as he stood up. He bit his tongue as the cool dawn air nipped at his skin and raised the hairs up one by one. The sun had not cast a golden light upon the small village of Berk yet. So either Hiccup was awake earlier than he should've been or it was one of those cloudy days that he'd come to know and love.

Hiccup picked up the travel sack sitting at the foot of his bed and walked downstairs. It was heavy with parchment and ink and quills and clothes and tools and everything else a young man could ever need to embark on a journey to a foreign land. In the past, an expedition from Berk to Central South was either deemed impossible or would take months at a time. But with the Dragon War over, the journey would only take less than a week's time.

But that didn't mean he didn't have his reservations.

Things could go wrong on the flight South, they could hit bad weather, there might be angry villagers who may attack, and random guards might stop him to explain why and how he was flying a dragon. He could get to Central South and not find lodging or not register in time or fail. His mind was running a million miles a minute while he thought of all of the potential problems that could easily arise.

He tried to push the fears aside as he dressed himself in his tunic and furs. The hairs on his arms bristled as he threaded his lanky arms and legs through the clothes. He could feel the energy pulse in his heart and trickle out of his fingertips. The fibers blessed by the village elder made him feel the quiet whisper of power that was practically invisible when he was awake. He remembered when he was a young boy, walking through the forests, and his fingers twitched as heart started to beat faster as he saw a strange monolith nestled in between two trees.

As he got closer and closer to the stone, a noise buzzed around him. It was something strange and frantic but somehow soothing at the same time. His hands and legs trembled before the rock but he pushed himself forward, afterall a rock couldn't do anything to him! It was a rock!

Inches away, the sounds of his own footsteps squishing into the wet, spring earth disappeared like smoke in the wind and the etherial hum infiltrated his skull, thrashing against his ear drums and buzzing deep into his soul.

From afar, the stone looked rather ordinary, a boulder sticking out of the earth, nothing strange. Even from up close, the stone was rather ordinary with its smooth surface and grey color. But when he touched its pebbled and cold surface, he felt like a bright light flare through him. It was akin to the light on a rare sunny day in the middle of Autumn or the light from the hearth when a fresh log was placed amongst the chars. It felt rejuvenating, welcoming, fulfilling, familiar.

He gasped and the light was gone. It was strange...His eyes didn't hurt or ache but he felt...whole?

After that event, he felt different. The wind somehow picked up around him, little nuts and bolts would roll towards him, even the yaks and cats looked at him like he was different for some reason.

Their eyes fixated upon him, searching his frail and flimsy body for answers and a trace of what was thousands of years ago. They would bleat at him, their noises somehow wilder than what they would usually make, and then turn away from Hiccup only to return to what they were doing.

Days of strange curses inflicted him. Swords and shields would mysteriously point to him, his inkwells would bubble and ripple the moment he looked upon them, and the wind. Oh how the wind would howl and whip around him and only him when he descended the long flight of stairs down from his house to the village market. Wind knocking him down when no one was around. Wind nearly carrying him up and plopping him down flat on his ass.

He slowly realized that he found the magic within him, the strength of his ancestors, the power that was at the heart of the myths and legends his father spoke of fondly around the fireplace when he was just a young boy, ready to fight the dragons like his father.

He snapped out of his little reverie, hair flying in his face and covering his eyes in soft brown locks. He carefully shut his bedroom door and descended the creaky old steps. He could hear the fire crackling, spitting chars and coals every now and then, and smelled the familiar odor of smoked fish and bread. He plopped his bag at the foot of the table and sat down, taking in the salty air from the cod and the sweet smell of the bread loaf in front of him.

He eyed the little wedge of cheese and knew that Stoick was trying to treat him today. It seemed a little silly but it really meant a lot to the boy. He reached over and broke a piece off before placing it on a piece of bread and chewing it quietly.

"Hiccup?" A strong baritone called out from the door behind him. Hiccup nearly choked as the sound caught him off guard. He pounded his chest to keep himself coughing, hoping that he wouldn't die before the exams in a few days.

"Ah Hiccup! There you are," Hiccup's father entered the room and clapped his back. The strength of his oversized arm and hand made him scoot forward in his seat. He somehow kept the piece of bread and cheese in his mouth, a little victory worth celebrating.

Hiccup paused for a moment to chew his food and swallow the lump before it could come back and try to assassinate him again. "Morning, dad," he said exasperatedly.

"I got your favorites, cod, honey bread, and that cheese you like so much." He navigated around the small dining table and took his seat across the boy. "I would've had some cabbage but no one has any other than Mildew and his are all-"

"Moldy?" he snuck in.

Stoick sighed, a little way of chastising his son without actually saying anything. Hiccup knew what it meant and it was much easier than going on an entire tirade. It was a win-win for everybody.

Hiccup cleared his throat before moving towards the plate of smoked fish in the center of the table. His twiggy hand bumped against the

large meat patty of a hand his father had and he withdrew his own to place it into his lap.

"You can," Hiccup started.

"No, you first."

"No, I, uhh, I insist."

"It's alright, just--"

"No, I'm sure."

"I," Stoick sighed before reaching over and splitting the fish in half. "Thank you," he said as he placed the top half onto Hiccup's plate, oils staining his battle hardened fingertips in the process. Hiccup eyed the browned, decapitated fish, before picking at its leathery skin and munching on the pale meat beneath.

The two ate in silence for a majority of the time. Sometimes Hiccup would ask how the weather's looking and Stoick would simply reply that it would be "good" later today. Whether good meant there would be clear skies or that there wouldn't be a thunderstorm was up for debate but all he knew was that it would be "good" at some point in the future, most likely today.

"Wow, I'm full," Hiccup said half honestly. He didn't eat much, which was normal, but he didn't want to feel too lethargic during the flight. He needed to be completely focused or else...

"Oh, umm," he looked around, "I can pack you some extra food if you get hungry."

"Yeah, that'd be great." Hiccup got up and dusted off his tunic while Stoick started to clean the table.

A few oddly silent minutes passed as Stoick searched for a small bag to stuff the bread, fish, and cheese into. They were both used to the awkward silences, there was no way around it, but this felt different. Hiccup wanted to say something, something to break the quiet, something to fill the void, something, anything at all but there was an invisible force that held him back. Were there words to explain how worried he was? Words to show how anxious he felt? Words that could give his father hope? Words that could give him strength?

What if there weren't words at all?

Hiccup swallowed the hard lump in the back of his throat praying that this feeling would just go away. But it didn't.

Stoick coughed quietly, a bag of freshly caught fish and another with the incomplete breakfast in tow. Hiccup snapped out of his trance and picked up his travel sack. As he walked to the front door he felt something in his stomach move and kick. He tried to ignore it before pushing a creaky old door open. Hiccup stared up at the sky, an odd mix of grey and dark blue. The two colors pushed carefully against one another, a battle of attrition perhaps.

They walked to a small copse, the smell of earth and dew a hair

stronger than what it was inside the house. It wasn't long until they saw a dragon black as obsidian, scales smooth as polished iron, and decorated in leather riggings and metal mechanisms. The dragon's ear flaps snapped up and a single green eye peeked out from the blackness.

"Mornin' Toothless," Hiccup said affectionately before walking over and scratching it underneath his chin. He could feel the Night Fury's energy when he yawned; bristly and bright unlike the mellow and soft energy he sensed when around the other villagers. He looked at the boy with wide eyes as if asking where his breakfast was.

"Yeah, I know," he chuckled before silently motioning his father for the sack of raw cod. Stoick handed it to him, the weight catching the boy off guard, and he opened it. His face twisted in disgust as the stink of seven pieces of fish was not new to Hiccup but somehow it upset him a little more than he anticipated. Maybe it was the cheese...

He shook himself out of it and started to check the numerous gears and straps hoping that the work would get his mind off of things.

"Are you ready, Hiccup?" Stoick asked.

He continued tugging at the straps of leather as he gathered himself. "I hope so."

The large man clapped his son on the shoulder, "You'll do just fine."

His hands stopped working on the riggings for a moment as he collected his thoughts. He was quiet for a bit, still mulling over what he wanted to say. What needed to be said. "I'll make you proud, dad."

"Oh son," he kneeled down and smiled. The old skin creased as a smile grew on his lips and the edges of his eyes became a little watery. "You've already done that."

And for once, he was speechless. He scratched the back of his head and gulped hard, not really sure how to say what he wanted to say. He could only smile and whisper, "Thanks, dad."

He threw his arms around Stoick and hugged his neck as tightly as he could which wasn't very much at all. They've been getting along better after the Dragon War and it's been showing. They would talk sometimes at the breakfast table, Hiccup would catch his father speaking about him when he was entering the room, and he would occasionally crack him a smile every now and then. Things were better now.

Hiccup was the first to break the hug and coughed nervously. He caught a glimmer of joy out of his father's eyes and it warmed his heart. The brightness helped force the dark sickness in the pit of his gut away and it filled him with something exciting. It gave him relief, comfort, and hope and that's all he could really ask for.

Stoick stood up and helped load Toothless up with the survival gear

and his travel sack. A fishing rod and a flint stone went a long way when traveling, especially for how far they were going. They said Central South was at the edge of the world which was more likely than one would've thought.

"Alright dad," Hiccup straddled Toothless's body once as he was finished eating the fish. "I'll be back."

"Good luck son," he nodded before stepping back.

The dragon's wings flexed out, snapping to attention as he felt his rider's readiness. Hiccup nodded before whispering, "Alright Toothless, let's go."

And with that, the dragon squinted and began to run. He dodged fallen trees and mossy rocks, legs stomping into the wet earth, before spreading his wings and pushing hard into the sky.

Stoick could see a black creature racing South against the rosy dawn sky and sighed. He did all he could and walked back into the little house which suddenly felt much more empty and cold.

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Hiccup and Toothless had been flying for a day now, resting every now and then for water or food. In fact, they were at a small riverbank now to recuperate before setting off for one more push South before the day is over.

Hiccup was sitting on a log while Toothless pawed at the surface of the water, playing with his reflection. He needed to chart their course just to make sure they were on the right track. He pulled out the aged piece of parchment, wrinkles and indents bumping up against his fingers, and scanned the paper. He saw Berk, an odd shaped cluster of islands at the edge of the map, and traced his finger down the page.

"If we passed the shores but haven't reached the swamp lands yet," he muttered, "that puts us around, here?" he declared confusedly. His finger hovered over a large mass of trees, the Northern Forests as they were called by a few traders who have ventured into what was called the Mainland. It was hard to imagine something five times bigger than the island of Berk, let alone ten times; but a thousand times larger than Berk? Impossible!

But clearly this map said otherwise. It only went to show how little his village knew of the world beyond and how much exploring they had to do. They have always been restricted by storms and the sizes of their boats but now...

Toothless snatched a fish out of the river and held it in his maw, the tail flapping about and slapping his jaw wildly. He swallowed the silvery fish and let out a satisfied hum before looking at Hiccup curiously.

The dragon then bounded over to the boy, its massive legs creating massive splashes in the river and scaring away the fish.

"Woah wait," Hiccup put his arms up in defense, "what are you!"

He ground his paws into the earth right before he could crash into Hiccup and licked the boy enthusiastically.

"Oh gross!" he groaned as he tried to wipe the saliva out of his face and hair. "Why would you-"

Toothless sat on his haunches and wagged his tail excitedly.

"You do know that I have to wash my clothes now, right?"

Toothless could only nod.

Hiccup sighed and took off his fur vest, the piece heavily drenched in dragon spit, and tossed it onto the ground. "Well I guess we could camp out here for the night and get moving early morning, is that what you're trying to tell me?" he asked with a raised eyebrow.

Toothless did something akin to a shrug which looked a lot like he was getting ready to pounce once again.

Hiccup nearly jumped but when he figured out what the dragon meant he rolled his eyes and stripped himself of all of his clothes. "What am I going to do with you?" he shouted behind him. He tossed his garments into the river bed, letting them soak to free the viscous dragon spit from his weather beaten clothes. Dipping his toes into the water, he shivered as the coolness sent a prickling sensation up his foot and throughout his small frame.

He barely registered the sound of thumping behind him but when he did it was too late. "What are you doing?" he shrieked right before Toothless charged him and pushed him into the icy cold river.

"You overgrown lizard!" Hiccup shouted as he tried to stand up from the middle of the river. He fell and back down when his left foot slipped on a smooth rock underneath him.

Toothless frowned and swooped his tail fins against the surface of the water, covering Hiccup in a wave of cold water.

"Oh now you're in for it now!" Hiccup playfully snarled and swung his arms around to fling a small wave of water towards the dragon. His splashes were futile against the typhoons that wracked his body and nearly knocked him down.

They continued to play in the water until Hiccup's fingers and toes were wrinkled like dried meat and sun dried grapes. Toothless decided to laze on the riverbank, drying his scales as the sun gently warmed him up, while Hiccup hung his clothes on a branch and found tinder for a fire.

As they ate fish by a campfire, Hiccup could only wonder what other secrets the world held. The stars and moon looked different in this place but as long as Toothless was with him, he could manage.

* * *

><p>The dragon and the boy awoke before the morning sun, a feat in normal circumstances but of course today was not normal. Hiccup knew that they lost valuable time last night but it was important not to

push himself or Toothless too hard before they got to Central South.<p>

When they took off, the sun was barely peeking from the horizon. They glided above miles and miles of tall evergreen trees and rolling hills. The land started to flatten, the forests began to thin, and the sun beat down against their bodies angrily.

It was probably a good idea to land at this point, they could certainly use a break and they needed to refill their canteens immediately. Yesterday's strategy of flying until they needed more water seemed to work perfectly so Hiccup thought it would work today as well.

"Alright Toothless," Hiccup pointed to the ground. It seemed like there was water down there and a lot of it by the looks of things. But as they descended, Hiccup could tell the air was different somehow. It felt sticky and humid, like a midsummer's day when the sky was full of clouds.

When they landed, Hiccup's boot sank slightly into the wet, muddy Earth. His eyebrows shot up as he struggled for a bit before the ground relented and released him from its unnatural grasp. Hiccup took in his surroundings and felt a wave of exhaustion wash over him. All around him was mud and still water. Nothing but morose grey and lifeless green for as far as the eye could see. Crooked and dark colored trees pushed themselves above the waterline as if they all knew the water was somehow tainted and feared for their own health.

He turned around and saw Toothless dragging his tail in the wet soil, flicking piles of mud and dead reeds around. There was no way Toothless could get enough of a running start to take off in this swamp. They needed some solid ground or at least a place where Toothless's legs wouldn't be sink into the mud. If they tried to take off right here, it would take quite some time to work up a good enough speed but even then Toothless risked a sprained ankle or leg by running in this environment.

Hiccup squinted and held his hand against his forehead, hoping he could see something...

He spied a long stretch of land that was, oh Gods. If they were going to use that little island, they would need to ford the swamp in front of them. Hiccup didn't want to risk tripping on a submerged tree root and drowning but it was their only path. Navigating around it could take hours and that wouldn't necessarily mean they would find a way to get to the island.

"Alright bud," he slowly marched to the Night Fury, "we're gonna have to take a little swim."

Toothless grumbled and snorted but begrudgingly stepped into the swamp water in front of him. Hiccup sighed, pulled up his pant legs so they bunched up around his knee caps, and walked into the slimy water.

With each step, water seeped into his boot and splashed against his sides. He could feel his tunic getting heavier and the water getting deeper by the second. He waded past the reeds that whipped and licked

his skin with sharp snaps against his thighs. He was sure that there would be cuts and scratches at the end of all of this and prayed that there was enough balm for all of them.

Swamp water was now filling his boots faster than he expected. He hoped that he wouldn't lose a shoe in this process. How embarrassing would it be to come to the grand examination hall without shoes!

He knew hundreds if not thousands of applicants, government officials, and patrons would be there and he didn't want to leave a bad impression. He's done that before and it took him how many years to climb out of the hole he dug for himself? All he wanted to do was start off on the right foot this time.

He huffed and stomped through the mud and water as he thought of all the taunting, all the teasing, everything he had to endure because he didn't start off with the right foot. Maybe if he was just born a little taller or a little stockier then he wouldn't have had to deal with this! Just enough to fit in, just enough to not be so different.

Hiccup nearly lost his boot to the mud as he leaned forward. He hooked his arm around his kneecap and pulled hard. He must've stepped into a soft patch of mud or maybe he caught his foot on something. At this point, it didn't matter since he was now trapped. Throwing his weight upwards, he freed his ensnared boot but lost his balance and was flying back towards the water.

Toothless caught the boy just in time, using his forehead to lean him forward and steady himself. Hiccup huffed, a quiet thanks to the dragon that saved him the trouble of flying naked for a few hours.

Hiccup and Toothless trudged through the muddy water, arms and wings flailing to avoid the sting of insects and the ghostlike prickling of cobwebs against their skin. Water splashed all around them and coated them in a thin layer of dirt and mud. Hiccup scratched his neck as sweat trickled down his body and aggravated his sweltering flesh. If there was any solace, Hiccup could feel his body rising above the marsh water. His tunic clung to his waist and then his hips. The shore was so close and in a moment of impulse, Hiccup ran to the little strip of land with Toothless close on his tail.

The moment Hiccup felt his boots crunch into the moist and solid ground, he collapsed. His sopping wet fur vest weighed heavily on his shoulders and his pants clung tightly to his scrawny legs. He was very dehydrated and close to fainting. They needed water but they couldn't risk drinking what was around them because it was probably soiled with Gods know what.

He didn't know how far the next river or lake would be and by the time they would've reached Central South, water might be a precious commodity. Hiccup wiped the sweat off of his brow and laid his fur vest onto the ground. It did nothing to cool him down but that wasn't the point. He pulled a little bowl out from his traveling pack and scooped up some of the dirty swamp water behind him. It was hard to tell the difference between the soil and water but hopefully that would change.

Placing the bowl onto his vest, he kneeled right in front of it and

took a deep breath. He could hear birds in the distance, insects buzzing nearby, the sound of silence overtook him. Hiccup exhaled and saw the water's surface tremble. He then slammed his palms onto the earth with all his might and felt a pulse of energy leave him suddenly. Air and energy rushed out of him like a great warrior forcing a door open with his sword and shield. It charged forward in all directions and he could feel the sticky air around him push out for a moment before coming back in to fill the vacuum he created.

He leaned forward to see if the water changed at all and frowned when he realized it was still the same dirty, muddy water he pulled out of the bog.

Toothless craned his head and watched Hiccup toss the filthy water back into the swamp.

"Come on bud," Hiccup said tiredly, "we gotta get outta here."

He nodded silently and outstretched his wings which were glistening with condensation. Toothless hated the feeling of being hot and wet, it was either one or the other, never both.

Hiccup climbed up and adjusted himself on the saddle before letting Toothless start to run down the strip of solid earth. The sounds of legs thudding against ground never sounded so beautiful. Toothless pushed his wings once and Hiccup could himself lurching back as he was pulled faster and faster. Toothless kept on pushing and pushing, wings trying to get a lift before they ran out of solid ground. They could both see mossy water at the end and they were running out of land.

One final push and they were off the ground. They soared up into the sky and let the cool wind spin around them. But they had more important issues to deal with such as finding some clean water. They were desperate for water and if they didn't find some soon, they might very well faint in midair from dehydration.

They soared high into the clouds and let the sweet condensation stick to their skin. Toothless even opened his mouth, hoping that he could catch some water but mist is not enough to cure dry throats and burning skin.

Hiccup extended his energy and felt something so close to him, pressing against his soul with quiet strength and subdued tones. "Toothless," he said aloud, wind rushing against his face. "Let's just stay here, I don't want you to overexert yourself."

Toothless nodded and glided through the clouds. Leathery wings flapped as air weaved past them. Sunlight poked through the wispy clouds and Hiccup could feel the oppressive heat beat against his body once again. His body was a mix of hot and cold, wet and dry, exhausted and anxious.

Hiccup squinted his eyes and scanned the landscape below. Flat green land for as far as the eye could see. His eyes flew from one corner of his vision to the next searching for a sign of water. Some lowland, a farm, maybe even a grouping of trees could all point to some water.

His eyes strained against the brightness of the sun and he pressed

his hand against his sticky forehead. His forehead crinkled in an attempt to focus on the surroundings. Hills dominated the Earth below and it seemed to go on and on. An infinite canvas that draped before the eyes of the sun and moon.

They flew onwards in pursuit of water. Time slowed down to a crawl and the only way Hiccup knew that some time passed was when the sun glared right in his eyes. His arm ached from shielding his face from the light and his eyes strained against the light assailing him. Everything faded into some shade of light green or light blue and it felt like his head was floating away.

Toothless sank lower and lower as tiredness crept up upon him. Hiccup could feel the air changing around him. The warmth crept up on him and there was a dryness to the wind that matched his throat and tongue. He tried to shake himself out of his drowsiness and try one more time to find some water.

He squeezed his eyes and pressed his hand against his forehead to protect his eyes. He strained to find something against the endless grassy plains and hills. Something...Anything...

Something shimmered in the distance like a polished bolt in the forge or a gold coin in an aged chest. It was winked as Hiccup leaned forward to get a better view of it. Could it be?

"Toothless!" he pointed excitedly to the shining object on the horizon. "Come on buddy! I think that's water!"

The dragon's earflaps popped up at the mention of water.

"Come on! Let's go!" Hiccup shouted excitedly.

Toothless grunted in affirmation and flapped his wings as hard as he could. The sudden rush of speed propelled them farther and faster than before. The landscape blurred around them and the horizon faded away as they zeroed in on the glittering object in the distance. The world around them grew dark and their vision narrowed as that single object grew and grew.

The shining became more and more brilliant and adrenaline set into them. It was moments until they realized that it was a lake of water. A beautiful, pristine lake nestled amongst the grassy hills and trees that congregated around it.

Toothless barely avoided a crash landing into the lake and touched down only a few yards from the water. They both ran to the shore and lapped up the fresh water that was at their feet. Hiccup shivered as the liquid slipped through his fingers and his cupped palms, sending a sharp jab of coolness throughout his body. His throat relaxed as it slid down and wet each and every dry inch of skin and muscle, bringing it back to life from the lengthy drought he endured.

Toothless left Hiccup to cool himself underneath the shade of a tree but the boy didn't notice as he was off in some distant place thinking about the swamp.

Why couldn't he separate the clay and soil from the water? Was it really that hard? All he had to do was push and it would happen.

But that was the thing, he couldn't just push. It wasn't something he could do all the time. He couldn't just jump for Odin's sake! He had to look for Gods sake!

Hiccup was drawn back to the memory of meeting Toothless for the first time. He somehow shot the dragon out of the sky and found him writhing angrily in the dirt. And when he stood over him, dagger in both hands, poised to cut out its heart and bring himself glory...he couldn't.

It was strange, a little impulsive perhaps, but he couldn't kill the beast that he longed to slay. He saw a creature that was helpless and ready to accept a death it was not prepared for. He saw a monster stare at its own mortality and resign itself to the end that was promised for its kind.

He saw...himself.

So rather than going through with what he planned, what he wanted, what he thought he would do, he let the dragon go.

Hiccup, the curious boy, came back to observe the Night Fury, learn about it, and even question what he knew from his tribe. He wouldn't be where he was today if he didn't think a little.

And that's where his problem lay, he let his thoughts get in the way. If he just went for it then things would be different...but then again things would be different. If he only acted, the Dragon War would still be raging on. If he didn't step back for a moment and question what he was doing for a second, he wouldn't be here at all. If he didn't rely upon his judgement and trust what he learned from Toothless, would've killed his best friend.

Hiccup sighed and watched little waves lap at the lakeshore. The soft motions pushed pebbles and leaves onto the shore while dragging sand back into its depths. It was a push and pull sort of motion, a give and take, harmony at its finest.

He looked at a small grouping of rocks near the shore and took a deep breath. Raising his arm, he breathed out and felt his gut bubble and turn. Energy welled up in his heart and snaked through his arm and out of his hand. It coiled around his fingers, hissing as it awaited for his command, and slithered away.

He felt a connection with the stones and gulped.

He imagined smoke floating off of a charred log and felt the energy tug against his body. He could tell the rocks were rising and tightened his fist when they rose a few feet above the ground. Then he thought of a golden circlet, the kind that his mother used to say that princesses wore when they would step down a great staircase and impress all of her suitors. The rocks moved into place, creating a circle in the air and slowly revolving around a single point. He then closed his eyes and drew an arrow in his mind's eye. He wanted it to soar, fly straight and true, and hit the target right in the center at the end of the lake.

He opened his eyes and drew his hand close to his shoulder. The circle of stones became a line before his very eyes and when he felt

the strain of the magic against his bicep, he released his fist.

The stones shot forward and skipped against the surface of the water until they sunk into the lake's depths. Hiccup let his arm down and grinned as each one of the rocks slipped underneath the surface and left ripples where they bounced.

He may have not had the impulse but he had the intuition.

And for Hiccup, that's what counted.

End
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